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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OEXC](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH NGO LEADER RETURNS EMBASSY 9/11  
ANNIVERSARY GRANT AFTER ATTACKS FROM EXTREMIST PRESS

REF: A. A. ANKARA 005223

[1](#)B. B. ANKARA 005259

Classified By: Classified By: A/DCM Dan Sreebny for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On September 11, 2006 Embassy Ankara presented a grant to a Turkish NGO as part of post's 9/11 anniversary commemoration. The event received positive coverage in the mainstream broadcast and print media, but two extremist newspapers characterized the donation as "blood money" and attacked the NGO's leader in front-page stories. The sustained, vitriolic coverage caused organization members to call for the funds to be rejected, and the NGO issued a public statement on September 18 declining the donation. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) As part of Embassy Ankara's program to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, post donated \$10,000 to the Association for Aid and Solidarity with the Families of Martyrs from the Security Services (EMSAD), a Turkish NGO that provides assistance and support to families of victims of (mostly PKK) terrorism. EMSAD general director Nursen Donmez Kiricikaya agreed to accept the funds for use in educational scholarships for children who had lost a parent to terrorism. The organization was known to the Embassy as a reputable group, and Kiricikaya had recently participated in a State Department International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) on non-profit management. The donation was designed to reinforce the Turkish-American relationship in confronting and defeating terrorism.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In a September 11 ceremony, Ambassador Ross Wilson presented the donation to Ms. Kiricikaya. The two delivered positive remarks, and the event received equally positive coverage from the main television stations and newspapers. However, two extremist newspapers -- Vakit (circ. 66,000; represents Islamic fundamentalist views) and Yenicag (circ. 55,300; represents extreme nationalist views) -- attacked EMSAD and Kiricikaya for accepting the donation, calling it "blood money" and alleging that the United States was solely responsible for Turkish victims of PKK terrorism. They also attacked her IVLP program in the United States, alleging that it was a bribe to Ms. Kiricikaya. Aroused by the critical coverage of these two newspapers in sustained daily articles, EMSAD board members and clients began to call on Kiricikaya to reject the funds.

[1](#)4. (C) Ms. Kiricikaya also reported to Embassy staff that she had received death threats related to the donation. (Note: Vakit newspaper had previously been implicated in a shooting incident that targeted high-court judges, since the newspaper

had run front-page photos of the court's judges with articles condemning them for ruling against a plaintiff in a case involving the wearing of headscarves -- a sensitive domestic issue in Turkey. End Note.)

15. (SBU) One week after the donation was announced, Kiricikaya told the press that she would reject the donation, saying in a written statement, "The EMSAD administrative board has taken into consideration both public pressure and EMSAD members' request for the return of the donation." In response to press queries, the Ambassador and embassy press officers expressed our regret at this decision, while affirming that the money would go to support Turkish children through another NGO.

16. (C) Comment: This incident illustrates the vitriolic views of extremist media and organizations in Turkey, and their ability to have a negative impact on mainstream society and aspects of the Turkish-US relationship. While their opinions are rejected or ignored by most of the main Turkish media and groups, in this case they successfully incited their readers to pressure a respected NGO and its leader into refusing a previously-acceptable donation to help children of terrorism victims. They jumped on the anti-American bandwagon that the opposition now uses repeatedly to bash the government, using it as the basis for outlandish allegations that, unchallenged, were naturally accepted by individuals inclined to view America as being behind every perceived conspiracy against Turkey. The more respectable media, organizations and individuals in Turkey did not take part in this unjustified attack -- but they also notably refrained from defending EMSAD, Ms. Kiricikaya or the American donation. This provides another example of how (particularly as long as PKK violence continues) anti-government voices across the political spectrum will use anti-American sentiment (often within the cloak of Turkish nationalism) as

an effective domestic political club. End Comment.

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